

**Public Works Consolidation Review Committee**  
**Draft Committee Minutes**  
**August 16, 2017**

Committee Members Present: Elaine Sopchak, Chair, Michael Plageman, Vice Chair, Susan Cook, Justin Rabidoux, South Burlington Public Works Director; Andrew Brown

Others Present: Dennis Lutz, Public Works Director, Rick Jones, Village Public Works Superintendent, and Catherine Hammond, minute taker.

The meeting was opened at 7:08 PM.

**Agenda item #1: Public to be heard**

No public attended

**Agenda item #2: Approve minutes of 2 August 2017**

Jason Rabidoux MOVED and Michael Plageman SECONDED that the minutes be approved. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**Agenda item #3: Evidence of quality of service**

*SEE/CLICK/FIX*: Mr. Jones provided a *SEE/CLICK/FIX* report from June 30, 2015 to August 16, 2017. However, the Town was not a part of this *SEE/CLICK/FIX* during this some of this period. Some complaints were acknowledged but not closed because it was an issue that would take years to fix, i.e. paving of a road. *SEE/CLICK/FIX* is good for resolving smaller maintenance issues. Larger maintenance issues might be better handled with email. Ms. Sopchak asked Mr. Rabidoux what South Burlington does to receive complaints. Mr. Rabidoux said that they do *SEE/CLICK/FIX*, three social media avenues, emails, phone calls. All complaints are logged, acknowledged, and funneled to a work order system. Mr. Plageman asked if only one person collects all the complaints. Mr. Rabidoux said that he is the only person that has access to *SEE/CLICK/FIX*, which is used only for Public Works issues. There is an administrative staff member who creates all the work orders. Mr. Jones does not have an administrative assistant, so the *SEE/CLICK/FIX* complaints are given directly to his Public Works staff. Mr. Lutz does have an administrative assistant who gives the *SEE/CLICK/FIX* complaints to the proper person to be handled. If a person calls or emails a complaint it will be forwarded to the proper person and copied to Mr. Lutz and at that point it will become a work order. There was a discussion that both boards get very few complaints from the residences, so therefore both Public Works departments are doing their jobs taking care of complaints. Mr. Lutz said that he keeps a winter log to rewrite the Winter Operations Plan for next winter. Ms. Sopchak asked if the *SEE/CLICK/FIX* data is used. Mr. Jones said no, Mr. Lutz said the Town uses the data to see what future issues might need to be fixed. Ms. Sopchak asked Mr. Plageman and Ms. Cook if the

Select Board ever uses this data to look at Public Works service. Both said no. Ms. Sopchak then asked if the measure of customer satisfaction for both Public Works departments is low, because of the low number of complaints that go to the boards and number of closed/satisfied problems. Again everyone thought that the Public Works departments are doing their job since there are so few complaints that go to the boards.

The Committee is charged with figuring out the effectiveness of the consolidation of the two Public Works departments; however the only measure at this time is *SEE/CLICK/FIX*, which is not all-inclusive. Mr. Plageman said if a complaint has not elevated to either board then the issue is being solved by the Public Works departments. Mr. Brown recommended exploring having a work order tracking system. A recommendation was made of adding a survey to the email or Facebook if the customer did or did not get what they wanted and why not.

#### **Agenda item #4: Discuss and finalize Survey Questions**

Ms. Sopchak informed the Committee she did not update the proposed survey questions because she questioned whether such a survey was necessary. Both Mr. Lutz and Mr. Jones said that nothing has changed in either department. Mr. Lutz suggested that a time be scheduled for one or two employees to meet with the Committee to discuss how the consolidation might affect them. Mr. Brown suggested that the Committee not do survey questions. The rest of the committee agreed.

#### **Agenda item #5: Current MOU**

In paragraph 8 of the current MOU the directive for the Review Committee is:

“On or before October 1, the Review Committee shall make recommendations to the Village Board and the Town Select Board on whether to continue or modify the shared Public Works Services model developed pursuant to this agreement, revert to the model existing prior to this agreement or establish a permanent combined Public Works Department for the Town and Village to become effective July 1, 2018.”

There are four choices on the current MOU: keep as is, go back to the way it was, continue with modifications, or continue to complete consolidation. The MOU is in its third year and will end on July 1, 2018. Mr. Rabidoux said that if the goal of the Committee is to get to full consolidation then some modifications need to be done to the MOU to reach that goal. Ms. Cook agreed and suggested no date certain but use benchmarks. Mr. Brown agreed and suggested that there be a study on things that were discussed, i.e. capital process, budgeting process, things that can be changed, and have the recommended changes for the MOU ready before July 1, 2018. The next choice is to keep the MOU as is, without any modifications, until there is a new manager, and then look at modifications with the goal of consolidation of the two departments. Ms. Sopchak recommended that the Committee extend the current MOU as is and when the Committee is able to pick it back up after the Village Meeting in April, they

should be able to kick off some studies. The revised MOU, if there is one, needs to allow enough time to include hiring a new manager and time to evaluate any studies that are done; the boards could then look at the studies and make any revisions. Mr. Brown suggested that the existing MOU be extended for one year and during that time the Committee perform the study recommendations.

Ms. Sopchak felt that instead of making a formal motion that the Committee would submit to both boards a list of recommendations. Both boards will need to approve commencing the studies necessary to implement those recommendations. The Committee recommended maintaining the MOU until it expires and then extending it until those studies are well underway or completed, at which time it is recommended to the boards to modify the MOU to accommodate the findings of the studies, with the eventual goal of fully merging both Public Works departments. Mr. Rabidoux said that a modification of the existing MOU is necessary to achieve a full merger, and this should be the recommendation of the Committee. The end result is to fully merge the two Public Works departments; to accomplish that studies will be done, the MOU should be modified, and the boards will set certain benchmarks. When the benchmarks are reached, the two departments will be fully merged.

Ms. Sopchak felt that there needed to be a fully merged governing board in the Village and Town in order to make some of the recommendations work and that the merged governing board would need to be under way or completed before the Public Works consolidation process is completed. The Committee does not need to solve this problem, just present some recommendations, timelines, and steps that should occur for a smooth transition. The Committee unanimously approved the following statement: This Committee recommends full consolidation of the Public Works departments of the Village and the Town based on incremental steps and recommendations made by this Committee.

Ms. Sopchak requested that all members send to her their recommendations by Saturday, August 19. She will combine all recommendations into one document and distribute them to the Committee members. At the next meeting the Committee will discuss timelines, priorities, and recommendations.

The next meeting will be August 30th at 7:00 PM.

The meeting adjourned at 8:26 PM.